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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





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REVIEW

OF

THE LADY SUPERIOR'S REPLY

TO

"Six Months in A Convent,"

BEING A

VINDICATION OF MISS REED.

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BOSTON:

WILLIAM PEIRCE AND WEBSTER & SOUTHARD,
No. 9, Cornhill,
AND LIGHT & HORTON, No. 1, Cornhill,
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REVIEW, &c.

THE public have been lately much interested by the publication of two works, entitled respectively, "Six Months in a Convent," by Miss Reed, and an "Answer" to the same by the Lady Superior. These books flatly contradict each other in very many particulars. On the one side, the *ignorant, low-lived, artful and hypocritical domestic*, (for the names bestowed upon her by the Catholics convey all these ideas) makes statements not very flattering to the good sense and piety of the inmates of the Convent, and in one instance, indeed, charging them with a sort of *Morganic* attempt to carry her off; while on the other, the *polished, dignified and lady-like* head of the Institution reiterates hardly anything in answer to these allegations, but "*liar,*" "*imposter,*" "*knave!*" With minds excited by these abusive epithets, how can any one personally interested in the parties come to an impartial conclusion? Under these circumstances, it appeared to us that it might be interesting to the public to hear the opinions of individuals, who have not the least acquaintance with the Lady Superior, the Nuns, Miss Reed, or the Committee of Publication. — When an affray is carried on, it is not those who mingle in the battle and partake the conflict, who can form the most correct idea on which side justice rests, or how the day is likely to result. It is only he that from a distance views the scene of war, that stands aloof from the hurry and bustle that may en-

list his feelings, who has an opportunity to observe what blows are given in fair contest, and what thrusts are dishonorably made. Such an individual is in a situation to observe with impartiality the conduct of the combatants; and it is with a spirit unfriendly to neither side, but with a disposition to discover and embrace the truth, that we now approach the examination of this subject.

We have, for a long time previous to the destruction of the Convent, been deeply interested in the discussions between the Catholics and Protestants. As American citizens ardently attached to our country and her institutions, — to that religious freedom which we have ever enjoyed — and proud of the general intelligence of our countrymen, with their high character for religion and virtue, we have trembled in view of the evils of which eminent men have continually warned us. Yet we have hoped that they might be deceived — that they looked upon the dark side of the picture — that the dangers which threatened us were the creations of the imagination rather than sober realities, and that Catholicism in the nineteenth century was entirely different in its spirit, precepts and practices, from that faith which established the Inquisition, considered ignorance the mother of devotion, and employed fire and sword as proper instruments of conversion. The cries of intolerance, fanaticism and persecution which have been raised by many conductors of the press against those eminent divines who have been lately interested in this subject, are too contemptible to have any influence with the thinking portion of the community; and the charge brought, in the House of Representatives, against thousands of the people of Massachusetts of “administering to the gloomy fanaticism which resulted in the destruction of the Convent of the Ursulines at Mount Benedict,” and which was afterward rewarded by an invitation to a public dinner, will certainly produce no very favorable impression as to the liberality or veracity of some of the friends of the Catholics.

As inquirers after the truth, the appearance of "Six Months in a Convent" was hailed by us with pleasure. Knowing nothing of Miss Reed, or of the circumstances connected with her departure from the Convent, except from a few vague rumors, to which we attached no importance, we thought that light might be thrown upon the Institution, and we hoped, for the honor of the age, that the practices of Catholicism, many of them foolish and humiliating, were not observed there. Such, however, if the book be true, is not the fact. The part written by Miss R. is a narration of ceremonies, indicative, to say the least, of no great elevation of mind, together with incidents and conversations occurring in her presence, which, whatever impression they may produce as to the piety of the inmates, certainly represent in no very enviable light, the good sense of the Bishop and Superior. Some of the conversations are almost too absurd to be credited, particularly that respecting the "Cholera," and the "Yankees," on pages 117, 118, and 131; and however good the authority, we could hardly "screw our credulity up to the sticking place for this tastefully conceived tale," had we not heard something similar from an entirely different source, some ten months since. These remarks of the Bishop to which we refer are as foolish and absurd as any in the book, and as we have other authority for believing them, than that of Miss R. we are (to imitate the elegant language of the introduction to the Reply) sufficiently gullible to swallow the remainder, provided we discover no gross inconsistencies or contradictions.

The style of the book is unaffected—the statements are those of a school-girl, telling what happened in her presence, and do not appear like the fabrications of an 'artful and designing person,' as she is represented; for no very artful person would state such simple things in the simple manner that she has done. She tells no *wonderful* stories, throws out no very horrible insinuations, and doubtless the lovers of the marvellous, were wofully disappointed on reading her production. To be sure, much has been said respecting her insinua-

tions of *death, dungeons and poison*, and it would be strange if such things did not occur to the mind of a "romantic young girl," as even her enemies sometimes represent her. But probably her readers will make all due allowances for the influence of her imagination, and perhaps not wholly condemn her, if she be *romantic* or *affected*, for if to be romantic is so horrible a crime, woe be to the rising generation !

The Introduction to the work is from an able pen, giving some account of the history of Miss Reed, her correspondence with Judge Fay, with the proceedings of the Boston Investigating Committee, &c. and is written in far more gentlemanly language, and in better temper than the Introduction to the "Reply."

We read "Six Months in a Convent," carefully, and were unable to discover in it inconsistency or contradictions. Had we found a single falsehood, we would have thrown it aside, or had we discovered inconsistencies in the statements of the Committee of Publication, (the "four and twenty *elders*" of the Reply,) which have since appeared, or had we been informed that they were not men of highly respectable standing, and unimpeachable character — of as good standing and character as the "liberal portion of the Legislature" even, we would have discarded the book notwithstanding its consistency ; because, from our knowledge of many of the friends of the Convent, and our high opinion of the character of the Superior obtained from them, we could not but have taken her word in preference to that of Miss R. on all points, the truth of which can only be learned from their assertions, and must from the nature of the case depend on their individual veracity. But there are inconsistencies in the testimony of the Superior in court and some of her subsequent statements, which we are unable to reconcile, and until they are explained, Miss R., in our opinion, is more worthy of credit.

As we before remarked, we perused the work attentively, and could not well disbelieve it, because of its *consistency*, its unassuming character, the spirit in which it was written, and

its apparent sincerity. In these respects, we think it appears to advantage, — both the Introduction and the Narrative, when compared with the “Reply,” and their opponents, we doubt not, would have made a more favorable impression on the public, had they imitated the spirit of “Six Months in a Convent,” and dealt less in abusive epithets.

It would be a very happy circumstance, if this book could be proved false, and the Superior would hardly feel greater pleasure than ourselves, should she disprove it; not that it would be a pleasure to us that the character of any individual should be injured, or that Miss R. should be proved to have acted wrong; but because we consider it better that one individual should have falsified than that an imputation should be cast on the character of a whole Community. We wish that those who have been injured, may be redressed, and we hope, for the honor and welfare of our country, it may appear that the miserable superstitions of Catholicism have been done away with in the Ursuline Community. Such has been the belief of many; and were it the fact, it would remove the fears of a multitude, and create a hope that an influence might go forth from that institution that should elevate the Catholics in this country, morally and intellectually, to a level with other denominations.

We believed that this book would be disproved. Such was the opinion of the friends of the Convent generally, and we placed great confidence in their representations. After the appearance of the “Answer,” it was stated by many that it was a complete vindication, and we took it up with pleasure, but have been disappointed.

In a discussion of this kind, the parties interested should avoid all misrepresentations and sophistry, and abide by facts, if they would elicit truth or obtain credit with the public. Miss Reed and her friends have ‘used all mildness,’ and thrown out no insinuations as to the character or *occupation* of their opponents. The ‘Answer,’ on the contrary, is filled with abuse, and

wherever it is abusive or falsifies, is a fit subject of ridicule and severe remark.

We open the book, and the first sentence that meets us is a beautiful illustration of the style of *argument* used by some of the very respectable and dignified opponents of Miss R. We are gravely told that “a *lie* will travel many leagues, while truth is putting on his boots!” Really if the author would not consider it an insult, we would call him a *gentleman*; for the elegant language in which he clothes his ideas, to say nothing of the highly appropriate manner of commencing the defence of a community of pious females, is worthy of some distinguished mark of respect. Were we in the situation of the Superior, we should cry ‘save us from our friends,’ for certainly no passage in the English language, not grossly vulgar, could produce greater disgust in the mind of the disinterested reader than this, and Mrs. Moffat’s most bitter enemy, could have wished no other beginning to the Introduction. It is calculated to produce prejudice at the very outset — to destroy all confidence in the writer — and will have that effect with every one, except him who considers such language a suitable reply to a “liar and imposter.”

“Coming events cast their shadows before,” says the writer, respecting the Introduction to Miss R.’s book. Shall we say this of his own? He could not have paid Miss R.’s narrative a higher compliment; we will not do the Superior so great injustice. With respect to the ‘horns of a dilemma’ on which he would hang the Committee, we say; with all due deference to his superior legal knowledge, ‘The prisoner is to be believed innocent until proved guilty;’ when proof is brought, they renounce their belief; till then, they run the risk, *with him*, of being “delivered over to the class of incurables” without the *least fear of mistake*.

We cannot go into all the particulars mentioned in the Preliminary Remarks. We can only give a very general idea of them, and state a few of the objects, which the writer has in view. He undertakes to prove Miss R. a liar — that her

book was issued for the purpose of destroying the character of the Ursulines — exasperating the public mind against Catholics — persecuting them through the medium of popular opinion, and driving them from the country, as enemies of true religion and liberty! He then launches out boldly against editors of religious and secular papers *for mentioning Miss R. as a personal acquaintance* — attacks at random large bodies of Christians — passes high eulogiums upon the Investigating Committee — visits New York to complain of the press in that city, and returns to find fault with counsel *paid* to defend a cause, for assuming a position *consistent with law and evidence*. Not content with this, he insinuates that the Committee of Publication — the ‘*sage* elders,’ — are hypocrites in religion; speaks sneeringly of their “*prayerful consideration of their duty*,” and compares the part they take in connection with Miss R. to that of the chorists in the ancient drama; with what propriety, we cannot perceive, save from mere contrast, as one might compare his own production, with that of any one gentlemanly in his language. He then promises to prove that the “*avowed design of the publication of Miss R.’s narrative was not the true one, but that it was merely a scaffolding to the introduction, which was designed to write down Catholicity and increase the hatred and intolerance, already existing on the part of Protestants, towards Catholic Christians* ;” for which charge the Protestants will no doubt, be much obliged to him. Where he has proved it, however, we have not been able to discover. The writer might as well have omitted all accusations and insinuations of this kind. They can do him or his cause no *good*, and may do harm. The public have, for a long time, been sick of them. Together with flattering notices of the Catholic population of this city, of whose virtue and intelligence one would think the less said the better, — with cries of fanaticism and intolerance raised against eminent clergymen of various denominations, they have been the essence of innumerable ‘editorials,’ since August last, and were even brought up from

their obscurity to add to the laurels of members of our Legislature. He should have omitted everything of this kind from a love of truth and justice, had he *not* been desirous of producing a favorable impression upon the people of this city and vicinity.

But the author of the Preliminary Remarks and his friends are inconsistent. They do Miss R.'s *intellect* great honor, and there are but few fathers who would not be proud of such ability in a favorite child. If we believe their statements, and without doubt, they hope we may, this *weak-minded* fanatical female is not so very *weak-minded* after all. It appears that, years ago, when but a child, she conceived the magnificent design, not of creating a *prejudice* against the Catholics *merely*, not of being simply "an humble instrument in the hands of God, of destroying the institution at Mount Benedict;" no, this was a mere cipher in the great work before her. But while her equals in age were engaged in the sports of youth, and carried away by its vanities, her thoughts were upon a higher object; she formed a plan, the execution of which would immortalize her — a design without a parallel in all history — she aimed at the extinction of Catholicism in the United States. Is there any weak-mindedness here? — And how has she succeeded? In a very few years, during which she remained in obscurity — never appearing before the public — never exciting the passions of men by writings or addresses (except by her Manuscript privately circulated, according to her enemies, in which however, her friends discover no great ability,) in this very short time she influences the minds of, we had almost said "hundreds of thousands of the people of this state" to such a degree, that in obedience to her mysterious influence, the Convent is burned, helpless women and children are driven from their beds at midnight, and the perpetrators escape justice. After this, instead of being in vited as principal or accessory in the affair, she goes entirely free from all public reproach — gains the good opinion of many talented, estimable, pious men — men not easily duped, — ap-

pears to them, notwithstanding their great penetration, a very interesting, amiable and intelligent young lady, and even makes them instruments in her hands for the promotion of her last great work,—the extinction of Catholicism in the United States. What a wonderful young lady this! what a weak-minded fanatical female! Truly the Superior has no contemptible foe to deal with; and from what we have seen of the contest thus far, we would advise her by all means to retreat from it immediately, ere she lose the few laurels that are left her. Hereafter to have been born, or to have lived in the humble and despised Milk Row, will be no great reproach; and this unassuming avenue *may* equal in reputation some localities near it, if it do not remove some small share of that disgrace which was to have clung to our country through all time, and caused the traveller, when visiting Bunker's height in future ages, to drop a *tear of sorrow over the ruins of our national honor*.

But to be serious. The Superior and her counsel must be consistent in their statements respecting Miss Reed, if they would not forfeit all credit. If they assert that she is a domestic, let them abide by the assertion — if, that she is a romantic, foolish young girl, let them abide by it, — if that she is a weak minded or an artful fanatic or an imposter, let them abide by it. But so long as they present her in such a “questionable shape,” — give her such variety of form and character — make her a complete moral intellectual and physical Proteus, we cannot but mistrust that they confound her with some of those who escaped from the convent before or after she did. Let them, then, bring her forward in some *one* of the innumerable forms in which they have hitherto presented her and keep her there, for it is as difficult to form any distinct idea of her now, as to discover the color of the fabled chameleon; — thus far she is but a *general idea* of woman.

We pass hastily over some statements of the writer, which the careful and attentive reader will easily explain, that are commented upon at some length, and by slight misrepresentations, create a

doubt as to Miss R.'s veracity. The writer cannot imagine what makes Miss R. a person of so much interest and consequence. We will inform him. Some years since she was mentioned publicly as a wonderful instance of conversion to the Catholic faith. She possessed, if we may believe them, many accomplishments, sufficient to create an interest in any young lady ; she associated, for some time, with the Rt. Rev. Bishop and the Catholic clergy, and was for several months under the instruction of the accomplished Lady Superior. The learned counsel appears to be well versed in 'old sayings.' Did he ever hear that a man was known by the company he kept ? Did he ever read that the companion of wise men, should be wise ? If so, can he not see why Miss R. should be a person of *some consequence* ?

"The Committee of Publication," says the writer, "have the *hardihood* to say, that Judge Fay has *obliged* them to publish certain *notes*." Why does not the writer or the Judge *deny* the assertion ?

Again, the writer says, "it was for the *interest* of the Ursulines that the Narrative should be published, and they were not opposed to its publication." Indeed ! It must have been a pleasure then ; and how do they express this pleasure ? If they pour out such rancor and venom in their good natured moments, we hope we may never come in their way when in an angry mood.

As to the insinuation respecting "the wages of iniquity," (about which the public were satisfied long ago by the publishers,) and the comparison of Miss R. to Titus Oates, Joanna Southcote and Matthias the Prophet, we only say that they are excellent specimens of the candor and argument of the learned counsel. They reason, if we understand them, in this way : — Matthias the Prophet was charged with murder ; therefore Miss R. is a liar ! Q. E. D.

With respect to the remark at the top of the 12th page of the Preliminaries ; "that Miss R. when with the Catholics pretended to fear her friends, and when she had re-

turned to them *pretended* to be in fear of the Catholics : " it appears to us very natural that she should *fear* her friends and the Catholics, when she had done anything that wounded the feelings of either. But what was this fear of her friends ? Not the fear that they would take her life, or use any violence towards her. Would a father take the life of his own child, for a difference in religious opinion ? We know of but one priesthood in this country, against whom it was ever insinuated that they recommended any violence in these matters ; and one might, perhaps, *reasonably* suppose that the parents of " a young lady brought up in a *very loose* manner " could not be *very* particular about *religious* matters. ' This fear, if we rightly understand it, was only the sensation that every one would experience at appearing before a father, who had been disobeyed, or relations, whose advice they had neglected, and found themselves in trouble. As to her fear of the Catholics, it appears to us *very wonderful*, that an ' ignorant, weak-minded female,' who had heard horrible stories of the practices of the Romish church, and had always lived in a country where they were generally believed, should be in *fear*, when she had subjected herself to the hatred of any portion of that church!!! Whether the Catholics ever resort to force here, we know not ; but that they have considerable *influence*, is evident from circumstances connected with the elopement and return to the convent, of Mrs. Mary St. John, if she were *not* insane. As to her insanity, there is a difference of opinion. At the trial of one of the rioters in Dec. last, the counsel for the defence wished to introduce testimony upon this point, which was ruled out by the Court as irrelevant, and very properly. It was stated at the time, that this testimony was sufficient to prove that she was not insane. And if we have not been misinformed, an individual, well qualified to judge correctly upon this subject, was acquainted with facts which would go far to establish the point. Any man of common sense, who shall read the Report of her evidence, will doubt that she was insane ; and if she were, it was the most singular case that

ever happened, and must have been one of great interest to the attending Physician : for we doubt whether its parallel can be found in the history of this malady. She remembers perfectly well, incidents that happened and conversations that were held, which were of no importance, — not affecting the character of the Ursulines : but when questioned respecting statements injurious to the Superior and others, she can recollect nothing : her memory seems to have come and gone very favorably ! Will the Physician of the house certify on oath that she was insane ? And if so, will he produce a similar case ? It is important that this fact be ascertained, because it will have some influence upon the opinion entertained of Miss R. If Mrs. St. John were not insane, she adds one to the number of those who eloped in consequence of dissatisfaction or improper treatment, and this fact adds to the probability that Miss R.'s stories are not entirely false. Besides, if this be the case, it may appear singular to some how the Bishop could so easily *persuade* a person in her right mind to return to a place from which she had just escaped.*

We cannot discover that the statement concerning Miss Shea, proves that Miss R. has slandered the Convent, or see the propriety of *blaming* her for getting her friends to sign certificates to fortify her reputation for truth, and then finding fault because she did not increase their number. Neither can we discover anything very amusing in the story that Dr. Thompson tells, except the fact that the Dr. should, in this instance, attach such dark and awful meaning to an expression, which, if he have an extensive practice, he must hear every day of his life. The fact is, if we credit the Dr. and others, Miss R. does everything *significantly*. She speaks of the Superior significantly ; — climbs a fence significantly ; — sprains her

* In Miss Alden's first letter it is stated: "I saw Mrs. Mary St. John, (the deranged person who eloped,) *who told me the particulars of her going.*" No one could know the particulars of her escape but herself, as it was private. Why could she not state them in court ? Is this an additional proof of insanity ?

wrist significantly, and cries out in presence of Mr. Hallet and others significantly, and Mr. Hallet runs to the Advocate Office to give it insertion in his paper. It is to such methods that they resort to excite prejudice against Miss Reed.

On the 20th page of the Preliminary Remarks, are the following questions. "Did any of Mr. K.'s family see the Convent men searching the canal with long poles, (*the 18th of Jan.* be it remembered?) Will Mrs G. confirm the statement about the wounds and the *frozen feet*?" We know not on what day Miss Reed left the Convent, but the Superior could not have chosen a better day if she wished to make Miss R.'s account of the circumstances connected with her escape, *probable*. The "*Eighteenth of Jan.*" is mentioned as a kind of *proof* that the canal could not have been searched with poles. We were absent from the city at that time, but not so far from it, that the weather in the two places would differ much. On referring to memoranda, we find that from the 14th to the 21st of Jan. the thermometer, at noon, ranged from 45° to 57°. Could there have been any great difficulty in searching the canal with poles? But if it was *so warm*, how could her *feet be frozen*? We refer to the Memoranda; "Jan. 18th 1832, *Some Rain!*"—Can any delicate female, who has remained within doors several months, walk across a field on a rainy day in winter without having *cold feet*? Would any one, subject to chilblains, run the risk, with a pair of *thick boots*? (which, probably Miss R. did not wear,) Now we would ask the author of the Remarks, or his friend, Dr. Thompson, if people never freeze their ears, or any other member, without being conscious of it at the time?—and also, whether people never *think* they have frozen their ears or their feet when it is not the case?—Has Miss Reed's veracity suffered here?

On the 21st page, Miss C. F. Alden is introduced, for the purpose of discrediting Miss R. She is represented as a person of character, well known in this vicinity, and is appealed to

with a sort of triumph. We know nothing of her, except what we learn from the book before us, and from two letters written by herself; one of which we insert that our readers may form their own opinion of her, from her manner of expressing herself, and from the *authority* on which she bestows certain epithets upon Miss R.

Belfast September 14th, 1834.

SIR:—I will now proceed to give you all the information in my possession of that *abandoned* girl, *who calls herself Miss Reed*. Abandoned I think she must be, who has lost *all* regard for *truth*.

I have never yet heard one report coming from her, respecting the Ursuline Community, but the *blackest, foulest falsehood*. I may not have heard them all. Perhaps it would be well to enumerate a few — such as their *inhuman* treatment of the sick. As I said in my first letter, a more false statement, concerning that Community, *cannot be uttered*.

As I was treated there, so were others, and that was with extreme tenderness. If any were sick, they always had a physician to prescribe, and an experienced infirmarian to attend them. This same sister Mary Magdalene, of whose sufferings she has said so much, had two own sisters to attend her, in her last illness, *one of whom related to me every circumstance*, together with the false statements of that abandoned girl.

I am not personally acquainted with Miss Reed, having left there a *few months* previous to her entrance. My name there was Mrs Mary Angela. Mrs. Mary Francis I knew well; we were there at the same time. I did not know but she was happy there; she never told me to the contrary. She was a Miss Kennedy from New York; she is at present a Sister of Charity in Baltimore. Miss Reed remained at the convent *six months* on charity; commenced her studies there between two and three years since. Her music she commenced there. And now where is she? — *a teacher of female youth*, in what is *called* a respectable school!

You may make what use you please of either of these letters; I leave it entirely to your better judgment.

With much respect, I remain, &c.

CAROLINE F. ALDEN.

They must be engaged in a desperate cause who find it necessary to send to Belfast in Maine, for a second-hand account of Miss R.'s character; and that too from a person knowing nothing of it, *of herself*, and possessed of no more discretion, (we will not say regard for decency) than to use such language in a communication which she knows is to be made public. We would gladly leave her here, without any fear that her assertions would injure Miss R.; but we wish to mention

two inconsistencies, very similar to those which the Superior and her counsel consider sufficient to destroy all credit. In her second letter she says, "Miss R. remained at the Convent six months." In her first letter she says, "I entered the Ursuline Convent in Dec. 1827. In her second, "having left there a few months previous to *her* (Miss R.'s) entrance." Miss R. entered, says the Superior Sept. 11, 1831. Miss Alden says, again, in her first letter, "during my residence there (a period of *four years*.)" We consider such contradictions of no importance; but mention them that those who decry '*Six Months in a Convent*,' may observe the inconsistencies of *their* side. We say nothing of Miss Alden's veracity; we know nothing against it. Her letters cannot affect Miss R.'s character, for the very good reason that, from her own acknowledgment she knows nothing of her personally, and probably never saw her. If mere retailers of rumors are to be brought forward as proper evidence in an important case like this, it were better to discontinue all discussion. Before leaving Miss Alden, we would say to her, that we hope no one, on the strength of vague rumor, will ever utter, of herself, publicly or privately, any language like that she has used for the purpose of injuring a female who is unknown to her. We would also observe, that we shall consider ourselves under great obligations to *the Author of the Remarks, or any one*, who will show us anything in Miss A.'s letters, that disproves, or even mentions what Miss Reed says of the practice of kneeling to the Bishop, kissing the floor, &c.

We would request our readers to examine carefully, and observe for themselves the misrepresentations (on the 23d and 24th pages of the Remarks) of Miss R.'s account of "tying a handkerchief about her face," and the conversations between the Bishop and Superior overheard by her. We pass on to notice an important assertion — important as affecting the veracity of the writer. We cordially agree with him, that "it is a well established rule of law and common sense, that, if a witness be convicted of a wilful falsehood in one fact, he is not

worthy of belief in any other ; at any rate, that his declaration is not to be received against that of a person who stands unimpeached." And *we* call on every honest mind to throw down *his* book "as a cabinet of falsehoods," if *he* be proved guilty of a single *wilfully false* statement.

On the 26th page he says ; "On page 94 of her (Miss R.'s) book, she speaks of a piece of poetry, *composed* by her at Mount Benedict." Will he show us where, on the 94th page, or in her *whole Narrative even*, she claims the *composition* of that poetry. The Superior herself says, that *Mrs. Austin* is the author of those lines, and yet our *candid* writer, after mentioning this statement of the Superior, speaks of them as her (Miss R.'s) *precious verses*. If they were copied by Miss R. in the manner here presented, what are they but a proof of the Superior's regard for *her own* reputation, if she would send such a person into the world as a teacher of music even ? There are many assertions here about Miss R. which, for all that we have discovered, rest entirely upon the writer's veracity. If he asks our belief of them, we refer him to the "established rule of law and common sense." After such exhibitions of *truth* and candor, it were better to have omitted the sneer at the editor of the Advocate, — a man, who, if we are correctly informed, for ability, moral courage and candor, will not suffer in comparison with any editor in the city, and who is infinitely superior in regard for truth (judging from Miss R.'s Introduction,) to the author of Preliminary Remarks. The Superior has been unfortunate in her selection of an assistant ; her worst enemy could have recommended no other.

It is painful and disgusting to discover language like that on the 28th page, in a work issued as a reply to "Six Months in a Convent" — a defence of the Ursuline Community. But even, if to have been a *domestic* were so high a crime, if the term were synonymous with *liar*, as one would infer from the use often made of it, (for it has been brought forward as a reason that Miss R. should not be credited,) it was hardly candid or proper to reiterate the charge at this late day ;

may more, the man who does it directly accuses Mr. Russell of falsehood. It is stated in the Reply, that Miss R. was a domestic in *his* family. In answer to a communication in the New York Star (supposed to have been written by Judge Fay.) in which *this grievous offence* was first mentioned, an article appeared in the Gazette, *from the publishers*, of whom Mr. R. is one, contradicting the statement. Mr. R. certainly knew whether Miss Reed ever lived in his family in that capacity, and as the denial of the assertion was made with his knowledge, the assertion is untrue, or he is party to a falsehood. We give a few extracts which will satisfy any candid mind, and also prove that there is some ground for supposing Miss R. to be a person of GOOD MORAL CHARACTER.

“There is not in the whole communication any specific charge against the *moral character*, the purity, or *veracity* of Miss Reed, and the writer of the abusive article in the Star knew that, had he, (or she) attempted that course, he would have rendered himself and the Editors, who should publish such a libel, amenable to the Grand Jury. He (or she) knew that the Rev. Mr. Croswell, Rector of Christ Church in Boston, a man universally beloved for his purity and piety of character, had certified that Miss Reed has “for more than two years been a communicant of his Church, that he has always regarded her as a devout person, and exemplary in her Christian walk and conversation, and that he places great confidence in her *sincerity and intention to relate the truth on all occasions.*”

“Let not Judge Fay and his family complain that they are brought before the public. They have chosen to drag before the public the aged father, and the highly respectable sisters of Miss Reed; ladies, who in every particular but mere wealth, are superior to those who have so rudely assailed them. Three of these ladies who are sneered at as ‘permanent domestics,’ are now heads of highly respectable families, living in respectable competence. They never were ‘domestics;’ though it would be no discredit, but an honor, if they had raised themselves from such a rank to their present intelligence and refinement. *The only one* of the family of whom it could be said with any pretence to truth, that she lived out as ‘help,’ resided with a lady before her marriage, for five years, as a companion, not a domestic, and *she* is now the wife of a man who is brother of one of the first Counsellors in Boston, and is himself as respectable as Judge Fay; nay, if *money* is the only test of *character*, we will warrant that his income, arising from a business in which some thirty thousand dollars are invested, exceeds the salary of the formidable aristocratic Judge of an Inferior Probate Court in Middlesex.

But what has all this to do with the veracity of Miss Reed? We have heard of an aristocracy of talent, but never of an aristocracy of *truth*. The poor and humble have as just claims to be believed as the rich and titled whether

in or out of Convents, and no Judge in this country, unless it were Judge Fay, would ever think of weighing testimony by the wealth and 'parentage' of the witnesses."

"One word as to the *motives* of this young lady in permitting her narrative to be published. 'An Episcopalian says she is *making a living* out of it. Now be it known to all the world, that this young lady, though pressed by her friends, *absolutely refused* to have any pecuniary interest in the printing."

The man who, with such statements before him, from men of unquestionable veracity, will continue to pour out his vile abuse, is worthy only of contempt. To convince him is impossible, for he will believe no one, however respectable, unless he coincide with his own preconceived notions. The Judge was comparatively blameless for *his* cry of "*help*;" HE may have had authority for it; but after it was denied by responsible persons, for the author of the Reply to raise it again, is inexcusable. We will not find fault with the Judge for the Letter in the Star, (if he wrote it;) he has other matters to look after which we cannot explain. How he could, consistently with truth, testify on oath, that the conduct of Mrs. Mary John was the cause of a certain outrage, and afterwards accuse the Editor of the Courier and Miss R. of causing the same outrage, is beyond our comprehension. Before bidding him farewell, we would beg leave to differ from "A Unitarian and Episcopalian," and advise him to throw aside his "last Wills and Testaments," and devote his time to reconciling these contradictions; for, until he does, he will not regain the good opinion he has lost.

We return now to our author, who has been rather rash — rather unguarded in some of his expressions, if, (as we suppose from what we have read,) he entertain a high opinion of *birth* or *employment*. We hope no one, after reading his language, will infer that he has been 'loosely brought up,' or that, having had excellent advantages, he has voluntarily degraded himself by mingling with *obscure*, low and illiterate people. But it would be strange, if there were no suspicion of an individual, who shows such an intimate acquaintance with the *refined parlance* of the kitchen, who is such an experienced cheapener of five shilling trinkets,—such an oracle in the price of ear

knobs ! We doubt if there are many *domestics* whose information upon subjects of this nature is more extensive. The writer astonishes us, by the great variety of his acquirements ; on all topics, from the Chorus of the ancient Drama, to the minutiae of the kitchen, he is a complete book of reference,—a walking cyclopedia,—and his innumerable attainments,—are only equalled by the “ Universal Medicines,” “ for coughs, colds, asthmas and consumptions ; removing sordes from the teeth, freckles from the face,” &c. &c.

Reminding our readers of the “ established rule of law and common sense,” we next present to them the Rev. Dr. Byrne ; who came forward voluntarily to impeach Miss R.’s veracity, and is introduced in the Pamphlet before us for the same purpose. It is unpleasant to us to be obliged to bring aught against the character of a clergyman of any denomination, but as his assertions, if true, destroy Miss R.’s credibility, it is necessary that we produce reasons, if there are any, why they should be received with caution. In a communication recently inserted in the Courier, written by him, he differs entirely from the Superior with respect to the time of certain transactions. Which of them falsifies ? A similar inaccuracy in a statement of Miss Reed, and no one would believe her ! But as the Dr. may be right, and the Superior wrong in *this* instance, we insert an article which is going the round of the papers.

“An Irish pauper, named Fitzgerald, died a few days ago in the Danvers almshouse, in which he had lived and been supported at the public expense for the last 20 years. Upon his person was found, after his decease, a letter directed to him, and signed “ John Bishop of Boston.” The letter acknowledged the possession of \$103 belonging to Fitzgerald ; stated that the writer sent the odd \$3, and that the 100 had been placed in the Savings’ Bank, from whence Fitzgerald might procure it by calling on the Rev. Mr. Taylor, or Rev. Mr. Byrne. (Catholic Priests.)

“ The overseers of the Danvers almshouse, thinking they had a claim upon this money, having supported Fitzgerald so long, applied at the Savings’ Bank ; but found it had been withdrawn by Mr. Byrne. They then applied to him ; and they state that he *at first denied all knowledge* of it, but afterwards accounted for it. On further inspection of the pauper’s papers, there was every reason to believe that at the time he first became an inmate of the

almshouse at Danvers, he was worth \$1400. What, however, had become of this money — how it had been invested — could not be ascertained. [On motion of Mr. Parsons, the report of the committee was referred to the Attorney General, with instructions to act upon this and the other matters contained therein, and report to the next General Court.]”

If the investigations of the Attorney General do not remove this imputation against the Rev. gentleman’s character, Miss Reed’s credit continues good. If the imputation *be removed*, there is a *rumor* of an affair not creditable to the Dr. that happened at the State House, about the time that the Report respecting the Danver’s pauper, was presented. But we may often form a correct opinion of a man by the company he keeps, and it is reasonable to suppose that the sentiments of his associates do not differ materially from his own. At a Society dinner in this city, not long ago, a Catholic clergyman, (if we remember right,) proposed a sentiment something like the following — “*George Pepper Esq.*, the talented Editor of the Literary and Catholic Sentinel!” Will our readers peruse carefully a few extracts from the editorials of the Sentinel, and decide for themselves what must be the character of that clergyman who publicly approbates the author of these extracts, — or of that body of clergymen, which does not discountenance such sentiments in a member of that body? May we not justly infer that the *Rev. Dr. Byrne* advocates these sentiments? We present the extracts:

“We have repeatedly informed the editor of the Recorder, that the Catholic Church does not, nor never did, withhold *authentic* versions of the Scriptures from the laity. But that she strictly and sternly prohibits them from reading those corrupt, pernicious, and debased versions issued out by that *hypocritical banditti* of *dishonest* and *pharisaical deceivers*, the Bible Societies, who venally trade in that deleterious commodity, is certain.

“If we were *before the awful tribunal* of God, and were asked to declare what our opinion of the Bible and Temperance canting moralists were, we would solemnly aver that it is our conviction, that a great part of them are knaves, adulterers, defrauders, and beastly drunkards. We have all heard of ‘*Purson Beecher’s oil*,’ and, doubtless, he knew well how and when to use it, in the recesses of his own house, though this fellow would preach vociferously, against the moderate use of ardent spirits.”

“We quote from that famous charge, which is now before us, for the especial benefit of the corrupt Bible mongers of this State, where *Bible reading* is daily producing such *direful moral effects*.”

“Never, while reason and opinion predominate in our mind, shall we retract the sentence of reprobation, which we felt called upon to pass, on the majority of the masked hypocrites who deal in *corrupt Bibles*, and those abominable temperance principles, not graduated on the rational scale of social morality. No member of that pestiferous association of *assumed virtue*, can have a more invincible abhorrence to the beastly vice of drunkenness than we; but we *would smite, a la Ham*, the face of any fanatic fellow of the *banditti*, who should have the daring insolence to tell us, that we committed a moral crime, by slaking our thirst with a moderate draught of ale or brandy.”

These are a fair specimen of the contents of the Sentinel — a paper circulated extensively among the Catholics of Boston, and from what we know of the influence of the Priests over the people, circulated with their permission, or what is equally blameable, without their interference. And what is the character of this paper? It is scurrilous — abusive — calculated to prejudice its readers against American Christians of all sects,—excite continual jealousy of the inhabitants of this country, and perpetuate that feeling of hostility which has always existed, and of which there is so much fear at the present time. That the priests have the *power* to stop it, is proved by the fact that they prevent the distribution and reading of the Bible — the education, at Protestant schools, of a large proportion of the Irish population; and that too when many of them are extremely desirous of being educated. Is intelligence incompatible with degradation? Are the clergy then accessory to the degradation of the people? Are they the cause of this degradation? — Hundreds of benevolent individuals, of all denominations stand ready to give instruction gratuitously, both to children and adults, and would do it but for the prohibition of whom? The Clergy? But what would be the effects of this instruction? Not the ability to mumble over, without understanding their import, a few Latin prayers — not the power of crossing themselves or telling their beads — not a custom, under the absurd expectation of appeasing the anger of the Most High, of bestowing their hard earned substance upon fallible

accountable beings like themselves; but a knowledge of the true God, a sense of their own rights; — a consciousness of their abilities, and an ambition to elevate themselves to an equality with the inhabitants of their adopted country. We know not by what authority the Bishop or the Clergy stand up between man and his Maker and keep back the word of Life,* neither can we conceive of the daring, that will incur this great responsibility, — or the presumption that will raise the cry of immorality against the Volume of Inspiration. We do not believe that individual ever yet lived, who thought himself possessed of the power to pardon sin; and for this reason, the practice appears to us a gross violation of right — a shameful imposition upon an ignorant portion of the community, and until our belief is changed, we can place no confidence in any one who practices or encourages such impositions.

We were never able to discover the connection between religious intolerance and the destruction of the Ursuline Convent,— between persecution and the burning of a Seminary — fanaticism and revenge of an *injury supposed* to have been done to a female, which was stated on oath as the sole cause of the act by those most deeply interested. Is there any proof that this was a religious institution? The school certainly was not; for it has been continually asserted, by those who should know the fact, that there was no more religion there than in any other school. Was there any religious establishment connected with it? There were devotions there at stated times, as in many families. Why then this cry of intolerance, which was raised in Faneuil Hall the day after the occurrence, echoed in the Hall of our Legislature, and is repeated in the Reply before us?

We have already spoken of Catholicism: but as many religious sects have been most unjustly implicated in the affair of August last, at Charlestown — we consider ourselves justified in making a few further remarks upon this subject. In all the

* See Catholic Sentinel, *passim*: also Bishop Fenwick's testimony at Buzzel's trial.

discussions upon Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from the dissemination of the principles and doctrines of the Church, with which we have been acquainted in this city, two *arguments* have been presented, which have satisfied the minds of the majority of the people, that there is no cause for alarm ; what there is in these arguments so *decisive*, we have never been able to discover. They are, in substance, as follows ; “ Bishop Fenwick, Cheverus and others are very talented, estimable, pious men ; ” — “ Catholicism in the Nineteenth century and in this country, differs entirely in its principles and practices from what it was formerly, and is now in Europe.” We shall make no lengthy comment upon these assertions, but only present a few ideas, with the hope that they will lead people to *think* and decide for themselves. In forming our opinions upon the character of men, we are but little influenced by their reputation or known ability. We have read somewhere in a book, which, being one of the laity we should not read, “ by *their fruits* ye shall know them.” — We propose then a few questions, which our readers can answer.

1. Has Bishop Fenwick any control over the Catholic population of this city ?

2. Does he not know that, in comparison with the rest of the population of this city, they are in a degraded condition and that ignorance is the cause of this degradation ?

3. Has he been willing that they should share in those means of education, which the liberality of our citizens has provided ? — and if not, has he made exertions to provide other means of education ?

4. If he has not exerted himself, to the extent of his ability, to educate them and improve their condition, is he that benevolent and pious man that he is represented ?

5. Is it possible that a man of his good natural sense — general information — and superior education, does not see the impiety and absurdity of many of the tenets and practices of the Romish church ?

6. What is the difference between Catholicism in this country and in Europe?

7. Has a voyage across the Atlantic any efficacy in removing superstition from the mind — in substituting knowledge for ignorance — liberality for intolerance?

8. Is it not contrary to the very nature of the human mind — that a large body of people should continue year after year in this country, in the midst of all this light and intelligence without the least mental improvement?

9. Is there not some powerful cause in continual operation — keeping out all light and knowledge from this mass of mind? — if so should it not be sought out and removed?

10. How long can this state of things continue, without endangering our civil and religious liberties?

We have attempted, in our hasty review of the "Preliminary Remarks," to expose their abuse, misrepresentation and *falsehood*. Whether we have been successful, our readers will decide. We will not insult the good sense of the people of this State by demonstrating to them the possibility or the consistency of being opposed, both to the outrage at Mount Benedict, and also to that *greater* outrage upon the character of Miss Reed — greater, — inasmuch as "a good name is better than riches" — greater, because, for property destroyed, there may be restitution, while character once lost may never be regained, an outrage, base, — because attempted in consequence of the belief that she was destitute and friendless. As we have before stated, we have no acquaintance with Miss Reed or her friends. We are conscious of no prejudice in favor of either party; but our opinion has been formed entirely from a careful perusal of both works; and it seems to us impossible that any unprejudiced person can have observed the gross attack made upon her character, on the strength of mere rumor, without astonishment. There is no insinuation that has not been thrown out against her — no abuse that has not been heaped upon

her. She has been assailed in high and low places — by men of every grade in society, and of every profession ; and we think she has *equal* cause with the “hapless Judge,” especially after this *last attack* from the Counsel, the Superior and Miss Alden, to exclaim,

“Tray, Blanche and Sweetheart, — see they bark at me.”

Having thus reviewed the “Preliminary Remarks,” written, by some other hand than the Lady Superior’s, we now come to the “Answer,” which purports to be, and probably is, her production. And here, we regret to say, that in the outset, we are met with expressions totally foreign from the courtesy, and gentleness that a lady, and especially, a religious devotee ought to exhibit on all occasions.

Miss Reed is charged with falsehood and baseness ; those who are acquainted with her, (it is insinuated,) condemn her character ; and then, because, from the absolute incorrectness of these statements, her friends who truly know her, have taken her by the hand, and have courageously supported her against the calumny and abuse of the Catholics, they are styled “leading agitators and sectarians.”

Every one that engages in public controversy, ought to know, that so far from benefiting, he vitally injures his cause, by indulging in opprobrious epithets. Many a person, disposed to view the Lady Superior’s conduct in the most favorable light, will turn in disgust, from these abusive epithets and reproachful allusions, and will involuntarily incline to favor Miss Reed, in consequence of the mild and unpretending character of her work. Its superiority in this respect over the “Answer,” cannot be doubted. On the very second page of the latter publication, it is insultingly and shamefully said of three most respectable individuals of this city, that Dr. B. the “pious Dr. F. and the Rev. Mr. C.” after reading Miss R.’s manuscript, “were disappointed that it was not so bad as they expected, yet they thanked her for what she had

written, and inspired her to still better things — “they shall have their reward.” And this aspersion, which the Superior must have known had not the least foundation, is cast upon men whose sincere desire to promote public tranquillity and virtue cannot be suspected. Before she issues another edition of the “Answer,” we recommend to her perusal, the anecdote of the Icclander, who, upon being observed to pay close attention to a dispute between two Englishmen, was asked how he could possibly be interested in a quarrel carried on in a language he did not understand. “I understand enough about it,” he replied, “to know which is in the wrong ; it is the one that talks loudly and fiercely.”

As many remarks have been made respecting the character of Miss Reed’s mind, we shall, as briefly as possible, offer our opinion concerning it. There is a time in every one’s life, when he is most under the influence of religious impressions. Individuals of a romantic temperament and of a retiring, meditative disposition, arrive at this period sooner than others. Such we take to have been the case with Miss R. With an imagination highly wrought up by the peculiar religious influences to which she had been subjected, and daily listening to encomiums upon the unalloyed happiness and peacefulness of secluded life, — the principal, and, we really believe, the sincere wish of her heart was, to be a *nun*. Filled with this determination, entertained by her for five years, she was, after persevering application, admitted into the Convent, and instructed in music, with the expectation of being received, after the requisite time, as one of the sisterhood. But alas, the life to which she had looked forward with anticipations of the purest enjoyment, turned out, in reality, to be a scene of bitter contention and wasting sorrow. The good mother’s tongue, that was tuned to the sweetest and softest notes in the presence of visiters, she found to her sorrow, could, in the privacy of the cloister, wag as pertly and flippantly as the like nimble member of “Kate the curst ;” — and the face that

was wreathed in smiles for *heretics*, had frequently a tart and vinegar aspect for the poor *saints*.

Placed in this situation, after having in vain attempted to reconcile herself to it, Miss R. determined, if it was in her power, to leave the Convent. But the religious faith she had embraced, still held too firm a hold on her mind to permit her to abandon it. She expressed a wish to be transferred to the Institution of the Sisters of Charity, at Emmetsburgh, at the same time signifying her dissatisfaction with her mode of life. Exasperated by any reflection upon her establishment, the Superior, at first, uses threatening and abusive language towards her, but soon artfully changes her course of conduct; and, fearing that, unless Miss R.'s wish is gratified, she may escape and make known her story to the world, she promises in the words of her own book, "to see if anything can be done to effect her wishes."

Canada, instead of Emmetsburg, is fixed upon as the place of her destination. There may be a variety of reasons best known to the Catholics why the former place should be preferred to the latter. She could, perhaps, be kept in greater secrecy there, and if it be true that Miss Kennedy had joined the Sisters of Charity, good policy would require that another person should not be sent to them with a similar opinion of the Convent. Under these circumstances, as stated by Miss R. an attempt was made to carry her off, which failed only because Mrs. Moffatt did not suppose her plans known to her, and perceived that at that time, she could not, without difficulty, accomplish her purpose. It is likely, however, she supposed that at some subsequent period, Miss R. would make no opposition to a proposal to gratify her desire to quit Mount Benedict, and that then her object would be easily and peaceably gained. Thus, in apprehension that an attempt would be made upon her personal liberty, the author of "Six Months in a Convent," succeeded in making her escape, and has published what she avers to be a true narrative of her residence in the Ursuline Institution.

It may be thought that we are giving a partial view of the case, but we think we have stated nothing that cannot be substantiated, and in order to introduce clearness and method into our investigation of the subject, we propose to discuss the three following questions.

1. Whether Miss Reed was admitted into the Convent to become a nun?

2. Whether she witnessed any improper, ridiculous or inhuman conduct on the part of the nuns or the Superior while she was an inmate?

3. Whether she was detained there against her will, and whether Mrs. Moffatt has given a satisfactory answer to the declaration of Miss R. that it was intended to make an attempt to send her to Canada?

Before, however, examining these points, we will notice some of the inconsistencies, inaccuracies and absurdities of the Superior's Answer, not exactly pertaining to the questions mentioned above.

And first, with regard to the title of Miss Reed's book. She declares that the very name "Six Months in a Convent," is a lie, since Miss R. staid there only four months and a few days; and on this fact she lays great stress, although the name was probably assumed only for convenience, and it is stated further down on the title page of Miss R.'s book, that she was an "inmate of the Ursuline Convent, *nearly* six months." O deplorable and *profound* effort to deceive in an individual, who, in one line, with malice prepense, seeks to mislead the public as to the *important* particular, whether the young lady staid six months, or four months seven days, in the institution, and in the next, blunders out a contradiction!

But we have not yet touched upon the most important point in relation to this matter. Let us mention it. Notwithstanding the Superior's punctiliousness as to dates, and her certainty that she is right, her own much lauded pupil, whom she has brought forward to support her, says, "Miss Reed remained at

the Convent six months on charity." It is a pity Miss Alden did not confine herself to answering the questions put to her, and take care not to o'erstep the line prescribed.

The Superior in her "card" says — "Rebecca Theresa Reed, alias St. Mary Agnes, though it was not known till a few months since, by the inmates of the Ursuline Community, that she had any pretension to the latter name."

A similar remark is made by her in page 26 of her book, with the omission, however, of the word "*St.*" the answer to both which we shall transcribe from the Morning Post, of April 11th, as it is satisfactory and incontrovertible. 'The article referred to was written in reply to Dr. Byrne.

"Father Byrne, in his letter to the Courier, says, "I informed her, she might be received by the name of Rebecca Theresa, or any other she preferred, and she herself chose *Mary Agnes Theresa*. Then, after three months instruction, *I administered baptism to her by this name.*"

"There it is in black and white. The Superior says that it was never known in the Convent till a *few* months ago, that Miss Reed had any pretension to the name of Mary Agnes, and now you tell the Superior and the world, what the Superior must have known as well as you, that *three years and a half ago*, you baptized Miss Reed by the name of Mary Agnes. Pray, worthy father, have the members of your church no pretension to their baptismal names?"

(Page 3d of the Answer.) "The Superior says, "I am too *old* now to change, if I would, the weapons of truth for those of falsehood, though I should in the latter case, oppose Miss Reed with her own contemptible means of warfare." What a pity it is this controversy was not carried on a few years ago, or that the Superior was not younger, for then she might indulge in lies and deceit, — the only reason for her not doing so at present, being, according to her own admission, nothing but her *age*!

(Page 8.) The Superior says, "I declared, in my testimony on the trial of the rioters, that the vows of my religious order

were, poverty, chastity, obedience and the instruction of female youth," — not 'poverty, chastity, and obedience ; to separate ourselves from the world, and to follow the instructions of the Superior.' We are unable to perceive any difference between these two forms, important enough, to require adjustment. We suspect that the clause she most desired to get rid of, is that, in which the nuns are represented as obliging themselves to follow the instructions of the Superior." If this be the case, she has most certainly failed ; for, on the 37th page she remarks on the passage, where Miss R. makes the Superior tell her she had failed in obedience to her — "obedience is one of the few rules she adverts to and remembers probably from the reason of her numerous admitted infractions of it."

Again, she states on the same page, that the profits were expended in "embellishing and cultivating the land, which in 1827 was literally, a *barren* hill, and that to accomplish this, one, two, or three men were constantly kept on the farm at the average rate of fifteen dollars a month and board ; and in the spring and summer, ten or twelve men were employed for months at a time, at a dollar a day." We acknowledge the right of people to do what they please with their own property ; no one would be foolish enough to object to the proprietors of Catholic Seminaries, strictly and truly such, spending their money as they saw fit ; but we must positively affirm that it is the height of absurdity in the members of the Convent, solemnly to devote themselves to a life of POVERTY, and then, in direct opposition to their vow, to lay out, adorn, and beautify Mount Benedict, until it was nearly metamorphosed into an earthly paradise, and to crown its summit with a splendid mansion. These alterations, we admit, were an ornament to Charlestown, but yet no one can doubt, that their real design was, the gratification of the Sisterhood. Offer such a residence, and such a garden, separated from the vow to seclusion, (which the Superior even says is not taken by them,) to almost any man in the community, no matter how high or how rich he is, and see if he would not gladly make the exchange. Simi-

lar inconsistencies have been manifested from time immemorial, in the monasteries of Europe, the members of which, by their vow, doom themselves to poverty and wretchedness, and nevertheless, luxuriate in the most delicious retreats, and live in mansions that tire the eye with their gorgeous magnificence, experiencing a happiness that the Mahometan never dares hope for, till he reaches the third heaven, and

“Black-eyed Houris wait upon his steps.”

(Page 16.) “It is singular that the inmates of the Community should be so far duped as to allow themselves to *tremble*, in approaching me; particularly, as it has depended *on them entirely*, since the first three years that I have been their Superior, to depose me, and to choose another in my stead, should I, by word, or action, have rendered myself obnoxious to their censure.”

Now, keeping this paragraph in mind, compare with it, this statement on the 6th page.

“I did not introduce myself or the community into Boston, but in 1821, came at the earnest solicitation of the former Superior and her sisters. The Superior, having lost two of her sisters, &c. and seeing her last hour approaching, wished me to replace her. I acceded to her wishes.” How, we ask the Superior, can you get over this palpable contradiction? In one part of your work, you say, “the deposing and the choosing of the Superior depend *entirely* on the nuns, and yet here you state that the former Superior wished you to succeed her, the nuns, who as you say, have the *whole* control, having no more hand in the transaction than if they did not exist. Ah, Mrs. Moffatt! Mrs. Moffatt! did you ever hear of nuns, on their sole authority, removing the head of their community? They would as soon dare to cut off their own heads!

The contradiction between the statements of the Lady Superior and Dr. Byrne, concerning the time when the former became acquainted with Miss Reed, is so plainly shown, and

the ideas are so ably expressed in the "Reply to Dr. Byrne," from which we have already quoted, that we cannot forbear extracting that part of the article.

The writer, who signs himself "Wolfangum," addresses Dr. Byrne as follows.

"You say, that on page 61, Miss R. mentions a sermon she heard on Good Friday, and which, you add, was April 1, (meaning no doubt 1831,) and that from what she says then, and from other parts of the narrative, a person might suppose that she had frequently visited, and been well acquainted with the Superior before she was introduced to me. 'This, however, I believe was not the case.' Then, father Byrne, you don't believe the Superior tells the truth, for here, again, you and she have got hold of the two ends of the fact, pulling different ways.

"You say, that shortly after being introduced to you, she went to reside with Mrs. Haynes, where she remained, till she went to the Convent. Again, you say, that she had been there a *considerable* time before I yielded to her wishes to give her a letter of *introduction* to the Superior, and you add that *after* this, you saw the Superior, and that she only consented to see Miss R. to disabuse her of her intention to become a nun.

"All this must have happened, according to your own story, long *after* March, 1831, because, you say, you first saw Miss R. in March, 1832, and that it was *after* that she went to Mrs. Haynes, and that she had been staying there a "*considerable* time," before you introduced her to the Superior, and had never seen her before that time.

"Very well, this is your side of the case. Now what says "My Lady Superior to all this? In a letter directed to William C. Reed, Esq. she says "*your daughter has been here REPEATEDLY since last November soliciting* ME to receive her."

"There, father Byrne, the Superior says Miss Reed has been at the Convent repeatedly, soliciting *her*, ever since Nov. 1830,

and you say that you first introduced Miss Reed to her ladyship, about May or June, 1831, some six months after."

And these totally irreconcilable statements are made by two individuals, who have urgently called public attention to an error, (if it be such,) made by Miss Reed with regard to the time of her entering the Convent.

(Page 15.) Miss Reed is represented as making use of such expressions as these ; — "O, if I could take a cross, and go through the streets of Boston, making known the true faith ! O if I could preach to the heretics, and make known to them their errors ! &c." * * "Such exclamations appear to us to be precisely what might be expected from an enthusiastic young woman, entirely under the influence of warm and bigoted advocates of the Catholic faith. They were doubtless prompted by the conversations she heard there, and afford strong confirmation of the account Miss Reed gives of the *charitable* and *good-natured* remarks concerning Dr. Beecher, as stated on the 116th page of her book, to which we refer the reader.

We pass over the parts of the pamphlet in which it is *gravely* affirmed that Mrs. Mary Ursula does not say *daown* for *down*, although the world is, at the same time, assured of the *vitally important and deeply interesting* fact, that she does, however, pronounce in a way not very agreeable to the *refined* ears of the community.

We shall not notice such declarations as "We had no such rules." — "*Complin* was not a morning prayer" — "No such circumstances ever took place" — "Pages 106, &c., depict Miss Reed's talent in the art of dissimulation" — "The falsity and absurdity of page 109, can be easily detected" — "The story of her falling prostrate is of course *false*" — "Pages 157 and 158 are *false*" — "Pages 155 and 156 are remarkable, only for the acknowledgments of the petty tricks which seem so familiar to her," &c. &c. &c. Some of these expressions relate to trifling particulars — and as to the others, we will not enter the lists in which scurrility is resorted, to as

the principal means of defence. The Superior says "she has been taught to despise a lie." We sincerely wish that she had been also taught to abhor the use of the word.

(Page 16.) "We never supposed, when Miss Reed was with us that she was a *spy*." This remark comes with an ill grace from a lady, who, was believed by the scholars to listen, (or employ some one to listen,) secretly to the conversation they held with one another after retiring to bed, and to endeavor to overhear what they said to their parents, when visited by them.

(Page 74.) "There was no office of adoration to the Blessed Virgin. Catholics *honor*, in a special manner, the Virgin Mary, as she is the mother of Christ; but they do not *adore* her. *Adoration* they pay to none but God." In contradiction to this assertion, we will quote from the "Catholic Manual," the authority of which, we presume the Superior will not question, merely premising, that the meaning of "*adore*," as shown by its derivation, is *to pray to*.

[From the 44th page of the Catholic Manual, printed at Baltimore.]

A PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our *petition* in our necessities; but *deliver* us from all dangers, O ever glorious and holy Virgin!"

On the 46th page of the same work, we find the following prayer.

A PRAYER TO IMPORE THE PATRONAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

"O holy Mary! my sovereign Queen, and most loving Mother, receive me under thy blessed patronage, &c. this day, and every day, and at the *hour of my death*, I *recommend to thee my soul and body*. I commit to thy care *all my hopes and comforts, all my afflictions and miseries, my life and my death*," &c. We ask confidently, are expressions like these made use of, only in *honor* of the Blessed Virgin. Do they not constitute that worship which Christ says is due to the Supreme Being alone?

(Page 23.) "The poetry which she speaks of was composed for her by Mrs. Mary Austin." This fact speaks volumes in favor of the *intelligence* and *polite acquirements* of the *accomplished* females of Mount Benedict. Why, a school girl would have been soundly whipped for offering up such a piece of composition! Take the very first line of it.

"My dear ma *mare*, you shall *always* find, &c."

Has Mrs. Moffatt ever heard the story of the girl, who, after being shut up in a room three long hours to write a letter to her aunt, could get no farther than "My dear *ant*,"—and who heard, as the reward of all her efforts, the cutting question, "What! child, have you been confined here so long only to call your aunt a *pismire*?" Similar dismay must have been exhibited by the Superior, on reading these finished verses, and we can easily imagine the countenance she assumed, when, turning to the inspired author, she, perhaps, exclaimed, Mary Austin, Mary Austin!—have you been for so many years placed in the midst of the advantages afforded by my elegant society, only to call your mother a *mare*!

An interesting portion of the "Answer," is that in which Miss Reed is made to enumerate the number of clothes she had on her bed. We will give the whole of the story for the amusement of our readers.

"One cold day, I asked Miss Reed, how she had slept the preceding night. She said her feet had been cold. I was surprised, (for what reason we certainly can't perceive, it is not a very surprising thing for folks to be cold in cold weather,) and telling her I feared that her bed had not been attended to, I asked her to specify what bed-clothes she had; to which she replied, cotton and flannel sheets, five blankets, two comforters and a counterpane." Can the Superior expect to find any one of sufficient "*gullibility*" to swallow this account with all its accompaniments. If she is so oppressively liberal to the other ladies of the Institution, they have, instead of a severe Superior, one who almost *smothers* them with kind-

ness. Sure are we that under this superincumbent pressure, the whole sisterhood must, to use the Lady Superior's elegant language, be as soft and flat as "*pancakes*."

We next come to the Superior's contradiction of Miss Reed's statement with regard to the food given her while in the nunnery. Mrs. Moffatt says, "Miss Reed, being a person of feeble constitution, and not a member of the Community, had even delicacies which they had not." On turning to Miss R.'s book (page 83,) we ascertain what these delicacies were: it is there stated that she twice received from the Superior's table, as a great favor, some "*apple parings*."

(Page 25.) "Had we felt inclined to use such cruelty, as to confine Mrs. Mary Francis, the Selectmen of Charlestown, as well as the public at large, who have had ample opportunity of examining the Convent *since* its destruction, will be able to assert whether or not we had places suitable for executing so shocking a design." "The public at large" have certainly had the best means of judging, whether or no, there were cells in the Convent *before* it was burnt down, by gazing at the bare wall. Such an idea is hardly better than that of the man who thought people would understand exactly what kind of a house he had to sell, by inspecting a brick he had taken from it.

With regard to the foolish conversation the Bishop held with Mary Magdelene, about imploring the Almighty to send down a bushel of gold from heaven, for the purpose of establishing a college on Bunker Hill, and also the question he put to her as to when she expected to get to heaven, — we see no improbability in Miss R.'s account. Mary Austin, according to all representations, is declared to be very simple and illiterate, and it is a remarkable corroboration of Miss R.'s assertion, that she states the principal part of these silly observations, if not all of them, to have been directed by the Bishop to Mary Magdelene, who was the *sister* of Mary Austin, and was therefore, probably, not better informed.

(Page 142.) "Had such a remark been made, says the Superior, by any one in the community, that she hoped there was not another *Judas* among them, it would have been very appropriate." Then she admits a grand point that is at issue between her and Miss Reed, viz. that there *had* been "*another Judas*" among them, who was Mary Francis, alias Miss Kennedy, and if so, that this woman ran away from the Convent, through dislike of the treatment she received there, or was sent away from it, for if she had experienced kind usage, and entire harmony of feeling had subsisted between her and the Superior, there would not have been the least reason in the world for her turning "*Judas*."

We come now to a part of the Reply in which the Superior really makes a fair hit ! We acknowledge it to be such. The subject is important, and Mrs. Moffatt *magnanimously* confesses the fault she was guilty of in the matter. The poignancy of her ridicule, too, is so great that there is no resisting it, — it is absolutely withering ! Let us see what she says :

"Miss R. sent, a long time after she left, for two silk gowns ; and, in order to exonerate the Institution from (the charge, we suppose she meant) of having defrauded her of rightful property, it may be well to mention here, that at the time we were expecting the Cholera, and while, of course, we were making all due exertion, to free the habitation of everything that might cause impure air, necessity forced us to commit them to the flames." What a *sublime* spectacle the conflagration must have presented. The nuns, it may be, marched out into the Convent Yard, in regular file, with the Lady Superior at their head, and the *warlike* and *gallant* Peter Rossiter, elevating on high the obnoxious articles, on the extremity of a pitch-fork, and we dare say, that Mary Austin, who appears to be the Sappho of the Community, was prevailed upon to deliver a poem on the occasion. Granting the Superior's statement to be true, it is certainly a strange way to defend the Institution from the charge of unlawfully keeping the property, to declare that they burnt it up, — a method similar to that

often adopted in Spain by the Inquisitors, to exonerate themselves from the accusation of embezzling property, except that the latter pocketed the *money*, and committed the *owner* to the flames.

We would ask, respectfully, of course, whether it be not a *possible* supposition, that the silk gowns were contaminated by staying in the Convent, especially as they remained there "so long," and Miss R., during the *whole* time she continued at Mount Benedict, was obliged to wear "pongee, in order that she might have the uniform of the pupils."

But, after all, supposing Mrs. Moffatt states the fact, and it is not of the least consequence, what does it prove, but that Miss R., on leaving the Convent, put away from herself everything that could defile her. Well would it be, if all persons connected with Catholic establishments were equally careful.

We have now, we are glad to say, done with the frivolous and ridiculous parts of the Reply. If, in answering what was nonsensical or contemptible, we have indulged too much in levity, we can only plead, in our defence, the common saying that "ridicule must be met with ridicule," and, likewise, our belief, that passages of the Reply are too absurd, to demand serious comment. Whether, in noticing such portions, we have been carried by the impulse of the moment too far, or not,—we sincerely rejoice that we have finished them, and are now returning to the straight path of sober discussion.

There are important questions before us to be decided. Let us approach them with the utmost impartiality and candor, and determine to abide by whatever result reason and common sense justify.

1. The first question that offers itself to our consideration is—Was Miss Reed admitted into the Convent to become a nun?

Miss Reed, on the 55th page of "*Six Months in a Convent*," says, "she (that is, the Superior,) inquired in what capacity I desired to enter the institution, whether as a Recluse, or a scholar, &c. I replied, that I did not consider my education complete; that I wished to go into the school, attached to the

nunnery, on the same terms as other pupils, until I had made sufficient progress to take the veil and become a Recluse."

Now for the Lady Superior's story. "Our design in admitting her, was not to fit her for becoming a teacher in the Convent, nor a recluse; but to enable her to obtain sufficient education to keep a small school," &c.

Here the two parties are completely at variance. Let us inquire which tells the most straight forward, consistent and probable story.

Dr. Byrne, in his letter to the Courier, says, "I used to tell Miss R. that I thought she would not and could not be received as an Ursuline at Mount Benedict," of course implying that she had told him she would like to be. He further remarks, "that he saw the Superior, and told her he did not consider Miss Reed a fit person to become a member of the community, that is, an Ursuline; — that he wished her to see Miss Reed, to disabuse her of her notions about becoming a nun."

Now the Superior makes statements totally irreconcilable with the foregoing testimony of Dr. Byrne. She says "Miss Reed, having prevailed on the Rev. Mr. Byrne to write to me, requesting I would have a conversation with her, I consented to see her *twice* in the course of *nine* months. In each of these visits, she solicited *most earnestly* to be admitted as a *servant*; and assured me she both *could* and *would* be able to wash, iron, scrub the floors," &c.

Again, on the 12th page of the "Answer," it is asserted that "Miss Reed did not say she wished to go into the school, until she had made sufficient progress to take the veil, but asked admittance as a *servant*, even after I proposed, at the third interview, that she should be a *pupil*." Now, we ask, if these two stories are not inconsistent. Dr. Byrne says that she told him "it was her wish to become an Ursuline; — the Superior on the other hand declares, that she requested her *most earnestly* to admit her as a *servant*, and does not even *hint* that she desired to join the sisterhood. But it may be answered,

perhaps, Miss Reed did tell one story to Dr. Byrne, and another to the Superior, which dissimulation corresponds to what some folks say of her character. This cannot be believed for a moment. We put it to any candid person, whether it is not altogether incredible, that a young woman, who, with tears entreats a Catholic priest to put her in the way of taking the veil, — who is so earnest in the matter, that she is charged by him with turning Catholic, for no other purpose than to gain admittance into the Convent — is it not incredible that this woman, when an interview is obtained for her with the Superior, that she *may* express this wish and have some conversation with her on the subject, — should not make the most distant allusion, — so far as we can gather from the Superior's account, — to her inclination to become a recluse, but should, (O what a fall was there,) "*most earnestly solicit* to be employed as a *servant, to scrub the floor, and to do other laborious work.*"

Again ; Miss Reed is described by Mrs. Moffatt as not knowing how to read, write, or sew with tolerable decency, and as having already been out to service. We wish to know then, what there was in Miss R.'s situation, that should make the Superior refuse to receive her as a *servant*, but "*propose* to admit her as a *pupil.*" Is this her usual habit with all who apply to become her domestics? The Superior *knows*, that Miss R. mentioned to her, her strong inclination to take the veil, and that she was admitted, in order to ascertain whether she was a fit person to join the community.

But we have not concluded the evidence on this head. It is known to the pupils, that Miss R. wore the dress of a *novice*, while in the institution, and assumed it on going there ; and if so, she was *received*, and she *continued* in the Convent, as a *candidate for the veil*, — all which is denied by the Superior.

There is one part of the proof we have not yet brought forward, which is clear and forcible. It is this, Dr. Bryne says, that in the letter of Sept. 2d, the Superior writes, "I think it

best that Miss Reed should make her *confession* and *communion* before she enters." We ask you directly, "My Lady Superior," do you think to impose so far on the common sense of your readers, as to make them believe you required a girl — who asked, as you say, only to be your "*servant*, and to *scrub your floor*, and whom, according to your book you admitted in no other capacity than that of a pupil — to *make confession* and *communion*?" The idea is too absurd to be entertained a moment. It is customary for those who enter nunneries, as novices, to go through these ceremonies, and Miss Reed's being obliged to go through them shows, conclusively, that she went to Mount Benedict as a candidate for the veil.

2. Let us now attend to another question of the greatest importance. Did anything improper, ridiculous, or inhuman take place in the Convent, while Miss Reed was connected with the Institution?

In the outset, we cannot but lay great stress upon the fact, (for it is such,) that after all the testimony they have been able to collect upon the subject — with the exception of the occasion when the Selectmen of Charlestown examined the building, and, setting aside Dr. Thompson, the physician of the establishment, and Mrs. Silas Bullard, who visited it when her child was sick, — they cannot produce a *single* Protestant who ever saw the apartments of the nuns, may more, who ever went beyond the parlor. In opposition to the inference that must inevitably follow from this want of proof, Mrs. Moffatt makes the very indefinite assertion, — "Many ladies and gentlemen, the parents and friends of the pupils were introduced into the *interior* of the Convent:" and again — "Our dwelling was accessible, at proper times, to the parents and friends of its numerous inmates." We ask her to establish these assertions, and she tells us to be satisfied by the evidence of their physician and a lady who visited her daughter when ill. The Lady Superior has lamentably failed in quieting public suspicion upon this subject. What satisfactory reason can be assigned for this *extreme* secrecy and caution? We ask the question significantly and seriously — will the Superior answer it?

There is some inconsistency in her statements on this point, to which we will briefly advert.

On page 5th of her book, she observes, "Every one, wishing to become well acquainted with the whole interior discipline of both pupils and teachers, could easily obtain information from any of the young ladies, who have been in the Institution, since the school was opened to the present day." The scholars then, she says, are well-informed as to the *whole* management of the Convent, and yet on page 7th, she remarks, "Miss Reed even could have enlightened the Committee on this point," (the point has no relation to our present purpose,) "as she says she saw but little of the scholars, and mentions, as an extraordinary fact, that they were, sometimes at vacation, permitted to enter the community, and embrace the Religieuse." Mrs. Moffatt admits then Miss R.'s statement to be correct, else how could she have enlightened the Committee, and if so, how could the scholars, who saw the nuns "*sometimes at vacation*," be "*well acquainted* with the *whole* interior discipline of pupils and teachers?"

We will now proceed to look more narrowly into the Institution; bearing in mind the privacy and mystery that are observed in regard to it.

At the trial of John R. Buzzell, one of the Convent rioters, Mary Benedict testified, "the nuns kneel to receive the Bishop's benediction." The Superior stated: "they make confessions to the Bishop — I make confession to him — it is done once a week." In her Reply, she says, "We never knelt in the presence of the Bishop, except two or three times a year, to ask his benediction." In order to obtain a little information concerning the method of confession, we looked at the 137th page of the Catholic Manual, used by the Catholics in this country, and the very first words we saw were, — the penitent, KNEELING down at the side of his ghostly father, makes the sign of the cross, and asks his blessing: Pray, Father, give me your blessing, for I have sinned. Then he says the *confiteor*; I confess, &c., "and this is the form that is *always* gone

through. So, it appears, that *every* time confession is made, the penitent *kneels*; — the Superior admits that the nuns confess “once a week,” and nevertheless declares “that they never kneel in presence of the Bishop except *two* or *three* times a year.” How will falsehood be discovered, when it most seems to wear the habiliments of truth? We wish to know too, whether the Superior will say that the scholars were not obliged to *kneel* before her and kiss the floor when guilty of some offences. The scholars say they were, and taking this fact in connection with the preceding statement, will it not appear, that kissing the floor *was* an important and frequent occupation of the inmates of the Community?

It is asserted, too, by some of the pupils that have attended the Convent school, that “Lives of the Saints” and books of a similar character containing marvellous stories, were given them to read aloud at table, the first one who got through eating, commencing to read, and, in this way, handing the book around.

We have before expressed the opinion that there is no improbability in Miss Reed’s account of the trifling and silly remarks made by the Bishop, when he went to the Convent. The chief of them, were addressed to Mary Magdalene, who was employed in the kitchen. The story of the bushel of gold is too nonsensical to be *invented* by any human imagination. Miss Reed, at least, would not have made it up.

If then, as we trust, we have proved the assertion of the Superior — that Miss R. was not admitted into the Convent, to become a Recluse, — to be untrue, as also her statement concerning the kneeling of the nuns, if there are numerous prevarications and contradictions in her book, that show it cannot be the offspring of truth — then is it not probable that she has falsified in her relation of the treatment she gave Mary Magdalene, and that there was in reality some inhuman conduct manifested by her in that case, — especially as after pronouncing Miss Reed’s “whole narration of the affair inaccurate,” the only error she points out in it, is, that Miss R. said, “after depositing the coffin in the tomb, the clergy retired to dinner,” “whereas,”

the Answer observes, "the coffin was deposited in the tomb at eight o'clock in the morning." Had Miss R.'s story been a tissue of errors, could not the Lady Superior have found more important ones, and is not the circumstance of her not having done so, strong proof that there were no such errors?

3. Whether Miss Reed was detained in the Convent against her will, and whether Mrs. Moffatt has given a satisfactory answer to the declaration of Miss R. that it was intended to make an attempt to send her to Canada?

The determination of this question is difficult, in consequence of our limited information; all our knowledge on the subject being derived from what little the Superior and the Bishop choose to say, added to what Miss Reed relates. She also states that Miss R. asked her "if she could not get her into another Convent," and that she replied, "she would see if anything could be done to effect her wishes."

The only thing we can do is, to inquire, which party tells the plainest and most consistent story. If Miss Reed's narration does not hold together, let us reject it; and on the other hand, if there are manifest contradictions in the Superior's account, let us abandon it, as inaccurate, and abide by what Miss R. says.

The Lady Superior's statement is, that Miss Reed was "disappointed in not being allowed to take the veil, and consequently eloped," and that she felt "rejoiced Miss R. had done so, because she had thereby spared them the painful necessity of *forcing* her to leave at the expiration of six months."

Between these statements there is a contrariety that will strike every one at first sight; — for how could she be under the necessity of *forcing* a girl to leave the Convent, who asked her expressly "*to get her into some other Convent.*" If it be said that Miss R. made this request, because Mrs. Moffatt had told her she should not stay at Mount Benedict, the answer is ready, that this could not have been the case, because Mrs. Moffatt at the trial of Buzzel, nearly four years after Miss R. left, testified on oath, that "when Miss Reed came, she was to stay six months, and she was to be taken in

afterwards if she desired it." There is a two-fold difficulty in the Superior's story. She feared "she would be under the necessity of *forcing* a girl to leave the Convent," who *requested* to be sent to some other institution ; and, secondly, Miss R. was to be permitted to stay *longer* than six months if she desired it ; and yet the Superior would force her to quit, if she did.

But we have not quite done with the testimony of the Superior on the trial of the Convent rioters. "Miss Reed was to be *taken in afterwards*" (that is, at the expiration of the six months) "if she desired it." Taken in ! — into what ? — the Convent ? — of course not, she was already there. We ask again, into what was she to be taken ? No satisfactory answer can be given, except that she was to be taken into the Community, — she was to become a Recluse, — and how does this agree with the assertion of the Superior, that she applied for admittance as a *servant*, and although this *privilege* was denied her, that she was received as a pupil, and *never* as a candidate for the veil.

The Superior says, "Supposing us to be so ignorant or stupid as to imagine we could carry Miss R. to Canada against her will, without discovery of it to the world, it cannot be believed for a moment, that we could rid the Community of her, and confine her in Canada, without exposing ourselves to certain conviction and punishment by the means of her friends,* who knew she was with us, and who could have at any time compelled us to produce her."

Yet this same Superior, who felt so much *concern* for Miss R.'s friends, and who in another part of her book says, she advised her "to return to her father, beg his forgiveness, and be a dutiful daughter," received her into the Convent — detained her to their great displeasure, and finally agreed to attempt her removal to some other Institution, against the known desire of her friends, and without apprising them of her intention.

(Page 37.) The Superior remarks, "Yet strange to say, she nowhere says that she asked permission to quit the Con-

* As her friends never saw her, when they called at the Convent, how could they know whether she was removed or not?

vent, but left it, as she has other places, clandestinely." Now the truth is, that Miss R. did, according to the Superior's own admission, (page 35,) ask leave "to quit the Convent," as she expressly states on the 154th page of her book. "I begged her to let me see some of my friends *there*," (at Mount Benedict,) "or permit me to return to the world."—The Superior's "accuracy is remarkable."

Let us now look at the other side. What is Miss Reed's story? It is simply that she has become dissatisfied with the Convent, and asked permission to go to some other—a fact which is acknowledged on both sides,—that she mentioned the Institution at Emmetsburg, but was told she could not go there—that a Convent in Canada was proposed, to which she objected, and that overhearing a plot to send her to Canada, and fearing an attempt upon her personal freedom, she eloped.

Are there any such inaccuracies in this relation as have been pointed out in that of the Superior? Much has been said of the impossibility of sending Miss R. to Canada in *three* days, since the stage takes *four*, and also, that "she would certainly cry out at some of the stopping places." It may be that Miss R. was mistaken as to the word,—that Canada was not the place,—this point was immaterial—and as to her crying out, it is well known that persons have been secretly transported from one spot to another, without the fact being discovered by any one on the road. The only important questions are—Was there any reason for detaining Miss R., or for sending her off clandestinely? And secondly,—Could she have left the Convent openly?

If, as we have been attempting to show, the forms and ceremonies of the Convent were absurd, if foolish conversations took place between the Bishop and some of the community, if, (and the Superior has pointed out only one inaccuracy in the relation, and that a trifling one,) the story of the cruel treatment of Mary Magdelene be true, then there were the most urgent reasons why an individual, who had seen the whole of their conduct, and had

shown signs of disapprobation, should be closely watched, should be prevented, at all risks, from quitting the Institution, or be sent to some other. If the necessity existed, then Miss R. of course, could not have left openly; and this statement is corroborated by the fact, that a relation of the wife of General Van Ness, several years ago, ran away from the Catholic establishment at Georgetown, which the lady, who was possessed of great dignity of character, would never have done, had it been in her power to have left publicly. Is it unlikely that Miss R. was similarly situated in the Ursuline Community? And besides, what motive could Miss R. have, in leaving as she did? Was it in order to make money by publishing an account of the Convent? If so, she certainly has not consulted her interest in keeping back her book for four years, and in being willing to testify all she knew about the Convent, on Buzzell's trial, by doing which, she would have foregone all pecuniary advantage. Can the reason be found in the odium and reproach she has incurred in the estimation of many respectable, but mistaken individuals whose good opinion she would not lightly esteem, nor heedlessly lose — in the manner in which her good sense and reputation have been assailed, and her own condition and that of her connections sneered at and vilified? It appears to us undeniable that no sufficient reason can be assigned for her *eloping* from the Convent, except that it was not in her power to leave openly — and if so, it must have been because she was a witness to mal-practices, which the Superior feared to have known to the world.

We had some remarks to make upon the absurdity of the charge of "dissimulation," brought against Miss R. by the Superior, who seems to suppose that Miss R. although surrounded by those whom she considered inimical to her, and desirous, as she was, to quit the Convent, ought to have revealed all her intentions, and thereby,

perhaps kept herself in perpetual confinement. But we have already gone beyond our intended limits, and must draw to a close.

Before concluding, however, we must be indulged in a few reflections upon the influence of Catholicism on this country. We fully believe that, unless great care be taken, this influence will be very injurious to our institutions, both civil and religious. It would be a work of supererogation in us, to show the absurdity and impiety of many of the Catholic forms and dogmas. That was done, as far back as the time of Luther, — and in our opinion, it is equally unnecessary to prove that the Catholic religion could not prevail to any considerable extent in the United States, and our liberty be preserved. For what is the support of the Catholic religion? It is Ignorance; it is Hostility to all mental improvement; it is Superstition; and how can liberty and these qualities breathe the same air? *Knowledge is the nutriment of freedom,—ignorance of slavery.*

The character of the Monasteries and Nunneries in Europe is well known. They are described as being the abodes of indolent and licentious people — the nurseries of vice. We do not say that this description can be proved to apply to the religious establishments of the Catholics in this country. The Papists here, being in a minority, and opposed by public opinion, are obliged to proceed with secrecy and caution. But we do earnestly ask Protestant parents, whether they are justifiable in patronising Convent schools, and thereby lending their aid and countenance to a religion incompatible with our institutions, and to the foundation of establishments that may become the haunts of iniquity. The Attorney General of the Commonwealth has termed the burning of the Convent a stain upon the escutcheon of the State, and said that the “chill of fifty winters must go through the soul of him, who,

standing upon Bunker's height gazes upon its black and tottering ruins."

Hereafter, unless due care be taken, as the American stands upon that same celebrated height, and sees Catholic establishments scattered in every direction over our country, — spots upon the sun of our prosperity, — he may feel the chill of rayless and perpetual winter — under the icy grasp of Catholic oppression! Are we Americans, and are we not desirous that that time may never come? It is our solemn duty then, to be watchful, lest the fair Temple of our Liberty be secretly undermined.

NOTES.

1. In order that our reference to the Thermometer on the 15th page, may be perfectly understood, we mention, though it may be thought unnecessary, that water freezes at 32°.

2. We forgot to notice the statement of the sisters of the sick *nun*, in the Appendix to the Superior's Reply. One of these ladies, if we may believe Miss Alden, (See letter on the 16th page,) gave her the information, at least eight months before Miss R.'s book appeared, on the strength of which she wrote the (shall we say scurrilous?) letter to Judge Fay. Would a person careful to speak nothing but the truth, feel authorized by mere rumor, to give such information? Besides, (according to page 16th of the Superior's Answer,) they are *interested in the success of the Convent school*, — an additional reason why their word should be received with caution.



A
REVIEW
OF
THE LADY SUPERIOR'S REPLY
TO
"Six Months in a Convent,"
BEING A
VINDICATION OF MISS REED.

BOSTON:
WILLIAM PEIRCE AND WEBSTER & SOUTHARD,
No. 9, Cornhill,
AND LIGHT & HORTON, No. 1, Cornhill,
1835.











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